

Name: _____

Date: _____

“AGE 14” PRE-READING ANNOTATIONS

The House of the Scorpion

Directions: You will ANNOTATE the following passages by [1] making inferences about the passage provided, [2] analyzing the author’s word choice, and [3] identifying the author’s use of figurative language and analyzing its purpose/meaning.

CHAPTER 23: “DEATH”

“Sit down, Mi Vida,” said El Patron, indicating a chair by the table. “As I remember, you like cookies.”

I did when I was six years old, thought Matt. What was going on here?

“Cat got your tongue” the old man said. “It’s like the first time we met, when Celia rescued you from the chicken litter.” He smiled. Matt didn’t. He had nothing to be happy about. “Ah, well,” sighed El Patron. “It always comes to this in the end. My clones forget about the wonderful years I give them, the presents, the entertainment, the good food. I don’t have to do it, you know.”

Matt stared ahead. He wanted to speak, but his throat had closed up.

“If I were like MacGregor—a good Farmer, but a *foul* human being—I would have had your brain destroyed from birth. Instead, it pleased me to give you the childhood I never had. I had to grovel at the feet of the ranchero who owned my parents’ land for every damn sack of cornmeal.”

Celia said nothing. She might have been carved out of stone.

CHAPTER 25: "THE FARM PATROL"

When he reached the end of the valley, he was confronted by a high granite cliff. Matt checked the map where it was, with a red line going straight to the top. It was higher than anything he'd ever attempted to climb. Matt looked for another way to proceed, but the map was firm on this point: *Onlee way out. Yu can do it*, said Tam Lin's note. Matt stared up at the impossibly distant bushes peeking over the top of the cliff until he was dizzy. The only good thing was that he didn't have to boost Celia ahead of him.

Matt inched from crevice to crevice until his legs began to tremble with fatigue. Halfway up he thought he couldn't move another inch. He hugged the granite face and wondered how long he could stay there before exhaustion forced him to let go. He'd fall onto jagged rocks. He'd die there. He might as well have let his heart be harvested by doctors. A shadow passed briefly over him, and after a moment it came back.

Only one thing cast a shadow on a cliff in such a deserted place. Matt was suddenly filled with rage. It was as though it came from some deep place, like lava in a volcano. He no longer felt exhausted or discouraged or anything else except a towering fury to survive. He pulled himself up, foothold by foothold, crag by crag, until he wriggled over the top and lay panting and surprised by his feat.

Matt looked up into the blinding, blue sky and heard the leathery flap of wings as the bird turned in the air. *I win, you ugly, good-for-nothing buzzard*, thought Matt. He smiled. He sounded just like El Patron.